

LIFE'S INEVITABLE BURDEN

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“For every man shall bear his own burden.”
Galatians 6:6

IN pondering Scripture truth, we must not strain metaphors, nor use figures of speech as though they were literal statements. You have an instance of the truth of this remark in this chapter. In one verse the apostle says, “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ,” whilst in the verse of our text, he says, “Every man shall bear his own burden.”

Still, he is not contradicting himself. He would be, if he were speaking literally of burdens, but he is speaking metaphorically, and consequently he uses the figure first in one way and then in another. It may be useful to us, brethren, to learn never to draw arguments and doctrines from metaphors. Many do and there are many supposed doctrines which really have no better ground-work than mere metaphors.

I remember hearing one contending against the chastening of God’s people, and he urged that the church was the bride of Christ and that it was impossible that Christ, as the Husband of the church, should in any way chasten or strike His own spouse, which would be a very reasonable thing to say of a man.

If the metaphor ran on four legs, the argument might have been correct, but as no metaphor is intended so to do, and is only to be understood in the sense intended by the person employing it, the argument is fallacious and valueless. I have heard others say that true Christians are citizens of heaven and consequently we ought not to exercise our votes in political matters. Another piece of utterly illogical reasoning, because we might as well say to Christian men that they ought not to eat animal food as they form the Lord’s flock, and sheep must not, and cannot, eat animal food. The fact is, the reasoning from metaphor is always risky and sometimes proves quite absurd.

I mention this because I am quite sure that very much of it does prevail in the Christian world and that people use the language of Scripture in a manner in which they would not use the same language if found in other books. The Word of God is, however, not to be treated with less, but more veneration in our reading and study of it, and yet in the same simple, common-sense fashion as that in which we would treat any other book.

The truth is there are burdens which may be shared and which should be shared. The burden of grief, the burden of pecuniary need, the burden of heart trouble, may sometime be borne, but on the other hand, there are burdens which no man can share with his fellow, nor ought he even to think of sharing, but where each man must stand apart and alone before God—and no one can assist him.

Of these burdens, we shall speak tonight, and they shall be our first point. Then, lest we should become burdensome to you, we shall offer a few considerations which may tend to take out the weight of the burdens which we must unavoidably carry, each one for himself. And then we shall close by endeavoring to find something practical to be done tonight as the result of the text.

First, then, we have to speak of—

I. CERTAIN BURDENS WHICH EACH MAN WILL BE QUITE CERTAIN TO HAVE TO BEAR FOR HIMSELF ALONE.

In speaking of the first three burdens which I shall have to mention, I shall address myself to you all, whether saints or sinners, for there are some truths which are common to all men as men. And so is the

first burden—the *burden of original sin*. The burden of our natural depravity, the burden of our fallen nature, the burden of our constitution, which is perverted by evil—these we shall, each one of us, have to carry for himself.

It may be said that this is not our burden, but Adam's—but the burden of the father, if he brings the whole household into poverty—becomes the burden of the family and each individual member of it. If the head should ache, it is no use for the hand to say, "It is no business of mine." There is, too, so vital and intimate a connection between the whole body of humanity, between Adam the head, and all the members of the body corporate, that Adam's fall becomes ours, Adam's ruin our ruin, and the taint in the blood is to be found in us all.

Some of you are "dead in trespasses and sins," and therefore this burden is no more a burden to you than the heavy clods of the churchyard are to the bodies that lie beneath them. But if ever you are quickened by divine grace, you will soon find that "the body of this death," as Paul calls indwelling sin, is a very heavy burden to battle with and you will have to personally fight out the conflict within your own soul.

You will have to call in the aid of divine power, or you will never get the victory, but—mark you—in the conquest of your own corruption, in the overcoming of your own besetting sins, and of those evils which are more powerful in you than they are in others because you are constitutionally inclined to them—in that battle you will have to fight for yourselves. You may get some assistance from other people's experience, but still the struggle and the conflict must be with you.

Young people, never imagine that all the training in the world can rid you of your evil without an earnest struggle on your own part. Don't conceive that a mother's prayers will give you tenderness of conscience unless you also learn of Christ for yourselves. Do not conceive that the rebukes of a father can conquer that evil temper unless you struggle against it. And if you habitually have a tendency to pride, do not conceive that the preacher's homilies against pride can overcome pride in you.

No, in the name of God you must go to the armory and ask for the sword of the Spirit, that you may, personally girded with divine strength, which you may obtain by earnest prayer, overcome in your own soul your besetting sins. In this respect, then, you will have to bear your own burden.

I know I have to bear mine and I do not know that any of you could help me, and I believe that each one of you, quickened by divine grace, must feel there is something peculiar about your case—some sin, perhaps, which you would not like to whisper into another's ear—perhaps, a sin of thought only, but still it is a burden. I hope it will become more and more a burden to you, for the more burdensome it becomes, the more likely are you to conquer it.

But you will have to bear it yourself and in the strength of the Holy Spirit you will have to conquer it, too, and get rid of it. You will have to pluck out the right eye and rend off the right arm. It were better for you, remember, to enter into life halt and maimed than to keep these and be cast into eternal hell. It is for you, in God's name, personally to do battle with your personal depravity.

Each man must, each man alone can, bear his own burden here. Again, each man must also bear *his own burden of personal sin*. Unless (there comes in the grand and gracious proviso), unless the sin be blotted out or be utterly removed. Every man who has sin to carry must bear his own burden. There is no shifting the sin from you to a sponsor. No fellow creature can stand for you and take your offenses.

The Lord Jesus Christ did take His people's sins, as He was their covenant head, surety and representative, and they who are in Christ are free from sin—their sin being utterly removed and having ceased to be, having been cast by the tremendous power of Christ into the depths of the sea, so that if they be sought for, they shall never be found against the Lord's people any more forever.

But do remember, dear hearer, that if you are not a pardoned soul, you have got a burden to carry and you will have to bear it. You will have to bear it now, for "he that believeth not is condemned already." You will have to bear it when you come to die, and you will have enough to do to die having this burden of sin pressing upon your heart.

Worst of all, you will have to bear it when your spirit is disembodied and your naked soul is called before your Maker. Ah! it will be a dreadful thing to go there with the blackness and defilement of sin about you! And you will have to bear it, too, in the day of the resurrection and in the solemn article of judgment. And then, last of all, you will have to bear your own burden in the eternal future and there it will sink you, sink you, sink you, beyond all hope of rescue or escape.

Now, while there is life there is hope. "All manner of sin and iniquity shall be forgiven unto men. If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," but unless the sin be removed, it must remain our own burden forever and forever. You will not get rid of it by joining a church. You cannot be rid of it by passing through rites and ceremonies. It will be no help to you to have been a citizen of a Christian nation, so-called, and to have worshipped in a Christian assembly. "Every man shall bear his own burden."

We came through the gates of life into this world, each man alone—we shall go back through the iron gates of death, each man apart, and the judgment, though crowds will be gathered, will be the judgment of so many individuals, each weighed in the scale alone, either to hear the verdict that they are "accepted in the Beloved," or else to hear it said, "Tekel"—"Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting."

How I wish that all my hearers would lay this to heart! Do not try to hide away in the crowd, for God will search and bring you out singly, and you shall be tested and tried apart from others. If you take in ever so many sovereigns to the bank, it is not very likely you will pass one bad one, for they would very soon discover it. That might be done, however, on earth, but it could not be done in heaven. "Every man shall bear his own burden," and if the burden of sin is upon him, it shall crush him beyond all hope.

Once again, while thus speaking to both saints and sinners, "Every man shall bear his own burden" *of the law*. By sin we do not escape from the law. The law of God is binding upon every man of woman born, unless, by being dead to the law through Christ, he escapes from under its yoke and bondage.

Now, the believer is not under law. Do not misunderstand me. I mean that he is not under law in the sense in which the sinner is under it. He is not under its condemning power. He is not under law, but he is under grace. The principle of law does not bind him—it is the principle of love which rules and governs his spirit.

Now, every man who is under the law is bound to keep it, and to keep it personally himself. See, my dear friends—you who have never fled to Christ—see where you are. The law is such a law that Adam failed to keep it, though innocent. How, then, shall you keep it while imperfect? It is a spiritual law, a law touching not only your actions, but your words and your thoughts—how can you keep it?

And yet, if you keep it not, it brandishes its great whip with the thongs, and brings it down upon the conscience with terrible effect. If you keep not the law, remember the sentence, "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." Happy is the man who has escaped from the territories of law and come into the dominions of grace! But so long as we are under the law, its burden is ours, and here comes in this grimly solemn truth, that it is a burden which each man must carry on his own shoulders, but carry it he cannot, and therefore crush us it will, and the curse of God must come upon us through the law.

And now we shall leave those three points which are common to all men, and simply speak to believers of the burdens which they have to carry, and which they ought joyfully to shoulder, each man for himself.

And first, my brethren, when we have been quickened and awakened, we shall find daily necessity for *the confession of sin* and here, "every man shall bear his own burden." A general confession may be very proper in the congregation, but it is only acceptable to God as it becomes an individual and particular confession in the case of each one using the words.

Repentance is peculiarly a private and personal grace. Lamentation for sin is a thing for one's own chamber—the husband apart, and the wife apart—the daughter apart and the mother apart. Into

confession in its fullness, no two can enter. As far as the sin has been common, they may confess together, but in so far as the guilt in each case is personal and particular, so must confession be.

My dear friends, let us not hesitate, whatever it may be that is upon our minds tonight, to come and acknowledge it before our Father, who is in heaven. We do not confess now like condemned criminals, who confess before execution because they must, but we confess like the returned prodigal, with our heads in our dear Father's bosom, conscious that we are forgiven, quite sure that His love is set upon us, and that we shall not be driven from Him on account of sin, but hating sin all the more because of this love—and weeping bitterly because of that wondrous grace which has had such compassion upon us, let us be very marked in our acknowledgment of sin in private.

I believe the Lord often withholds from His people a sweet sense of perfect acceptance until their confession shall be more precise—until they learn to “call a spade a spade,” as we say, and so make a clean breast of the matter before the Most High.

Further, my brethren, there is another burden we have to carry and which we must cheerfully shoulder, and that is *the yoke of Christ*. Jesus says, “Take my yoke upon you and learn of me.” And then He adds, “for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” We are bound to obey Christ. He is the Captain—we are His soldiers. There should be maintained in the church a sacred military discipline—we should obey spontaneously the commands of our great Leader.

He is our shepherd, we must keep close to Him—tracking in His footprints and delighting in His company. He is the Physician—we must follow His prescription, not hesitating, even though the draught He gives is very bitter. Perfect obedience is what Jesus Christ has a right to claim from us. Oh! that He would give us grace that He might receive according to His rights!

Is there any duty, my brethren, which you have not yet fulfilled and which presses upon your conscience? Or is there some other duty on which your conscience is but partially enlightened? Ask for a quickened conscience and when you obtain it, never tamper with it. Oh! to have a conscience quick as the apple of the eye, tender and delicate, that will not even bear the slightest dust of sin! Oh! to walk before God as Caleb did, of whom the Lord said, “My servant Caleb hath followed me fully.”

There were some of whom it was said, “They walked before the LORD, but not with all their heart, as did David.” May we have the whole-heartedness of the most consecrated towards the Savior, and whatever form the yoke of Christ may take, may we count it our highest joy to bear it. Since He carried our sorrow, let us be willing to carry out His commands to their utmost letter, desiring that not so much as a jot or a tittle shall be left unheeded of the Master's will.

Further, brethren, I think we ought, each one of us, to feel that we have a *burden of prayer* to carry to the mercy seat. “Every man shall bear his own burden” in this respect. I wish we did this in our assemblies. I am afraid that you often let me pray, but some of you do not pray yourselves. I am afraid, too, that private prayer is neglected by a very large number of Christians—not that the form of it is absolutely renounced, but the vigor of it is not maintained.

I wish I could say this without a blush concerning myself, but I do feel that very many of us do grievously fail here. We give the Lord some scanty five or ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, whereas our Puritan forefathers prayed sometimes for hours. But it would matter little about the time if we did but give the spirit. It is poor work, sometimes, our praying! Oh! that we wrestled with the angel and prevailed! My brethren, we have, every one of us, something to take before God in prayer—and we rob the church of our contributions to her treasury of intercession if we do not put our share into it.

Some of you ought to pray for the Sunday school more than you do. Some of you should bear in prayer the burden of the young of the congregation. The preacher has his burden of prayer—a heavy one. My brethren, the deacons and elders should be—I trust they are—peculiarly men of prayer. They have a burden to carry—a burden of prayer for the church.

And you aged fathers in our Israel, you, my dear sisters who are matrons in our midst, it often seems to me to be peculiarly your office to be intercessors for the church. It may be possible that many of you could not preach and could not be very serviceable in many active labors, but you can be the very

strength and sinews of war for the church militant by your prayers. No, no—it is not the whole church praying that you are to think of just now, but you yourself—praying—each man taking his own share of the great common burden which we have to take before the mercy seat and leave there.

So, too, must each of us take our own burden of *witnessing for Christ*. All saints cannot witness to all truth, since nobody knows all truth but God. Some of our hyper-Calvinistic friends also know it all, according to their own understanding—but we think that nobody else does, at any rate. Finite minds can only grasp part of truth. The Infinite alone can lay hold of the whole of truth. If we were altogether infallible in our knowledge of doctrine, we should be God, for only God can know all things, and know all things thoroughly—know all things without admixture of error.

But wherein we do know, each man is called to bear testimony to the truth he does know. There are many things that I do not know—why should I, then, pretend to be a witness to them? But there are some two or three things I do know. I am quite sure about them—and if I do not speak positively upon them, I shall fail to bear my burden before the Lord.

And there is some one truth, perhaps, my brother, about which you have a little light, a little more light than your neighbors. Do not hide the light. God does not ever light a lamp to put it under a bushel. If you have received, either by experience or research, any special light which is peculiar to you—spread it that it may be, as it should be, the common property of the church of God, to the glory of God.

I wish that Christians in these days thought more of bearing their witness. The Scottish people in years gone by attached great importance to the bearing of witness—testifying—standing out at all costs to give evidence to the truth. But nowadays truth is cast into the street, as though it were worthless, and Christian men will honor a truth and hold it, and yet will put their finger to their lips and say, “For peace’s sake, such a truth is to be unspoken.”

Nay, peace is precious, but it has its price, and is not to be purchased at any price. Truth first. “First pure, then peaceable.” First, the truth of God and then the peace of God. May we have both, but let us take care that we bear our own burden in witnessing for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, dear brethren, we have, each one of us, our own burden *in the matter of caring for souls*. You are placed, some of you, as working men amidst working men—your burden is manifestly your own class. Others of you move in other spheres. Do not forget that each sphere has its particular claim. You have ability? You have, then, a burden peculiar to a man of ability. You have wealth? There is a burden there.

On the other hand, you live in obscurity. Your utmost sphere is your little children, and your one or two rooms. Still remember that circles are prized not in proportion to their size, but in proportion to their roundness—and so we shall be honored and rewarded by grace, not according to the largeness of our sphere, but according to the way in which we have filled it for Christ. We must each bear the burden of our own sphere.

Mother, no one else can be a mother to your children and do for them what you should do. Minister, if you be truly sent of God, no one can be a sponsor for you in your ministry—you must take that burden which God has put upon you upon yourself. And you trader, merchant, working man—there is something which you, each of you, must do, and however earnest all the rest of Christians may be, they cannot, by the surplus of their zeal, if there be any, by any possibility make up for a deficiency in your case. The timber may be very strong in one part of the vessel, but the strength of the timber there is no recompense for a rotten portion in another part of the keel—it must be strong all over.

We are all set, as it were, to forge a chain, and if the link that you shall forge be thoroughly strong and well-welded, yet if I make a mess of my portion of the work, the chain will be injured all through. Let us remember this and discharge our own work in the strength of God, by the power of His Spirit, and we shall joy in ourselves by the Holy Ghost.

I might thus enlarge upon these burdens, but they all come to the same effect. There is one more word, however, which will be addressed, perhaps, to half a dozen here—probably not so many. Sometimes, upon some men, God casts a burden which He never puts on others. The prophet speaks of

“the burden of the LORD.” Probably we have all carried it at some time, but at any one particular time there will not be many who are bearing it. That burden may be something very extraordinary to others, though you have become so familiar with it that it seems ordinary to you.

Perhaps tonight something is saying in your soul, “Go and speak to such a one.” Do not violate that monition. Believe me, there is more in spiritual impulses than some people think. You have all read the old story of the Quaker, who felt moved to ride into a certain town, some ten or twelve miles off, at the dead of night, and to go to a certain house. He did so, found out the house, knocked at the door. No one came to the door. He knocked again, and when at last a man came downstairs, and opened the door, and asked him what he wanted, the Quaker said, “Perhaps thou canst tell me, for I do not know. The Lord has sent me to thee, but what for I know not.”

Then the man produced a rope and said that just when the knock came to the door he was in the top room, planning to hang himself. God had evidently sent the Quaker just at that time to prevent him. If you and I were more obedient to these “burdens of the LORD” when they come, we might often do more good than we do. We must not be fanatical—there is a line to be drawn—but at the same time I am afraid we often check sacred impulses, which, if followed, might be fraught with the most blessed consequences.

Do you feel called at this time, my dear friend, to a work which you never undertook before? Consult not with flesh and blood. Do not be particular about asking help and assistance. “Every man shall bear his own burden.” Go in the strength of God. If, like Gideon, you want a sign, take it, and when you have it and your heart has become like Gideon’s fleece, wet through, even though it be with sorrow, so that you could wring it out, then go in this, your might, for if God has sent you, He will go with you. “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” This may be a word to somebody—I know not to whom—but it was a burden on me to say it and there I leave it.

Lo! now we turn to the second truth of this theme, and with much greater brevity—

II. SOME THINGS WHICH LIFT THE WEIGHT OF THESE PRESSING BURDENS.

“Every man shall bear his own burden.” It is not pleasant to be talked to all this long time about your being a burden-bearer, but perhaps these things will make it more pleasant. The first thing of which to remind ourselves is this—that it is quite consistent with the truth declared in our text, to remind you that Jesus Christ is *the great burden-bearer for all His saints*—that though, on the one hand you will have to bear your own burdens, yet on the other hand Christ will bear all your burdens for you.

Your burden of sin was laid upon Him as the scapegoat for your soul. That you know, and now your sin is put away, and now tonight, whatever your burden be, come with it to your best friend, the “friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” Tell Him the cause of your complaint.

The disciples of John, when their master’s head was taken off, took up the body and “went and told Jesus.” Come and tell Jesus what it is that vexes you tonight. It is said of one sick child, “They brought him to Jesus.” Is your trouble a sick child, or is it your sick self, or what is it? Bring it to Jesus. All griefs either fly at His approach or else they change to joys, or if they remain griefs, they minister to us an abundance of spiritual wealth.

*“Come, make your wants, your burdens known;
He will present them at the throne;
And angel bands are waiting there,
His messages of love to bear.”*

You must remember that your burden is easy to bear when Christ is with you. When Jesus Christ has strengthened you with all strength in your inner man, and put into you His own omnipotence, to be your succor, then shall the burden cease to be a burden to you any longer.

This also may tend to lighten the pressure, *that as every man has to bear his own burden, so every man has his own hope*. I would be afraid to change with anybody else. I have sometimes thought, when I

have been much desponding, that I wished I had half as good a hope as some of my brethren, but when I come to think it over—I do not know—I do not know—I would be as happy as the least in the Lord's family if I knew that I was really one of His, but I really should not like to change with any of the little ones, or the great ones either, on the chance of their being His. No! I know my own hope and I will keep it.

And blessed be God, as we have our own burden, *so we have our own joy*. The most miserable and unhappy Christian in the world, when you come to get into his secrets, will tell you—he will let it out somehow—that he has a secret spring of joy which others have not. In fact, it is to be remarked that those who have deep griefs have generally proportionately deep joys. The man of superficial sorrow generally has superficial mirth, but the man whose heart has been bored through and through has a stream of joy springing up as from an artesian well, that cannot be equaled for freshness by the mere land springs of superficial piety.

Brethren, we would not part with our joys nor with our hope. Though we have our sorrows to ourselves, yet we have our joys to ourselves, too, and thank God, they cannot be taken away from us.

So, too, the Christian has Christ all to himself. I have sometimes tried to think of that. Here is the Lord Jesus Christ, able to save ten thousand times ten thousand sinners, and yet He is all mine! All Christ is mine! Here He is feeding the millions of His saints, and yet there is not a single crumb upon His table but what is mine, nor a grain of corn in the granary of my brother Joseph but what belongs to me.

All Christ belongs to each one of God's people. You have got a burden to yourself, but you have also got God to yourself—think of that! Have you ever remembered that if you were the only creature in the world—the only creature in the universe—if there were no angels and no other men—have you ever thought of what an inspection God would have of you, and how He would see you through and through?

Well, at this present moment, and at all times, you are as much an object of His inspection as if that were the case. For multitudes of objects do not divide the exercise of omniscience upon each one. The infinite mind of God is such that the infinite care of God belongs to every individual throughout the entire universe.

Yes, you have a God to yourself! Oh! what infinite supplies you have, Christian! Talk of your expenses! Look at your income! Speak of your poverty! Look at your wealth! You talk of your weakness—now estimate your strength. You can cast the plumb line to the bottom of your sorrows, and measure the Atlantic waves of your grief, but you cannot measure heaven above, nor the earth beneath, nor the depths of hell. And if you could measure these, God is greater than them all. Oh, why, then, do you despond because of the big burden, when you have peculiar help, peculiar joy, peculiar hope and peculiar strength? Rest in God and be joyful.

Once again, it is true that we, all of us, have a burden to carry, but *then we have not to carry that burden long*. You do not much pity a man who has to carry a load only during the twinkling of an eye. Well, the whole of life is not any more than that. Just think, my dear friends, of eternity—and what is life?

Imagine ourselves sitting down in heaven in the midst of eternal blessedness and what a moment life will seem. We shall know, then, what Paul meant when he said, "These light afflictions which are but for a moment." But for a moment! Oh! pluck up courage, man! You are nearer home than you thought you were and every moment you are getting nearer still. We find our horses quicken their speed when we turn their heads homeward and they drag their loads then with alacrity. Now, your head is homeward, Christian. You—

*"Nightly pitch your moving tent,
A day's march nearer home."*

Therefore, be of good comfort and let not the burden gall your shoulders.

Once more. If you have a burden to yourself, recollect that *you will have your own place in heaven, which nobody else will have*. You have your own sorrows, but you will have your own joys there. I think there is a note in the heavenly song for each one of us to take. I do not suppose that Mary Magdalene sings precisely the same note as the dying thief. There will be her lofty voice taking some of the treble notes and we shall have him, it may be, taking the deeper bass.

I believe that if one of us should be absent, the choir of heaven would not be complete. In the noblest orchestra all the instruments and voices are wanted for the completeness of the chorus, and so will it be in the orchestra of heaven. Paul says that the saints that are gone before into heaven are not perfect without us—that “they without us would not be made perfect,” that is to say, the company would not be complete, but gaps appear.

So long as there is one soldier in a squad who has not arrived, the battalion is not completely formed. So we must each get there to perfect, to complete the number of the saints in heaven. Well, then, beloved, as we are each one to have a place and portion in heaven, each a mansion to himself or herself, we may well be content to bear our burdens here alone.

And now to close. What is—

III. THE PRACTICAL INFERENCE AND RESULT?

I do not know what it may be, but oh! may God the Holy Spirit burn my text into your hearts. I do not want you to recollect so much anything I have said—it does not matter about that—you can forget it all. But I do want you to recollect this one truth—you Christians especially—that “every man shall bear his own burden.” *There is something for each one of you to do for Christ.*

Oh! that notion that the minister can do it, that the united action of the church can do it—it has ruined the Christian church to a large extent. A personal, individual sense of responsibility is what we want, each Christian man judging himself daily and hourly as to his capabilities, and obligations, and indebtedness to his Lord.

Brother minister, you have got your burden to bear. Is there any new work you can undertake for Christ, or any old work that wants strengthening, into which you can throw yourself with greater zeal? Then I pray you do it. My sister in the Lord, you have not done, perhaps, what you might do. Now, say in your heart, before you leave the pew, “By God’s grace, I will do whatever I can.” I can look round, round upon you here, and see some who are really doing more than I could for a moment ask you to do, for you are “in labors more abundant.”

I thank God that there are such in this church, but then I think of others. Oh! if all were like some, what a church we should be! If all the vines in our vineyard bore such clusters as some of the vines do! Oh! how the wine presses would burst with new wine. In the matter of liberality, the preacher must never judge—that is a matter for each man. “How much shouldst thou give unto thy Lord?”

In the matter of service, it is not for us to allot you your work, but what can you do? Now, what will you do tonight? “Oh! give me till the morning,” says one. No! No! We have not an hour that we can afford to waste. Let us serve God today—we will leave tomorrow to care for itself. Now is the accepted time for service, as well as salvation. Serve Him now. Do something to forward His kingdom and honor His name, now. The only way to serve Christ in the future is to serve Him in the present, for the future never comes, or if it does, it ceases to be future and is the living present.

Now I ask you, you who are now washed in His cleansing blood, you who now bear in your body the marks of the Lord Jesus, you who have lain on His bosom, you who have been kissed with the kisses of His mouth, you who have been brought from under the apple tree, and know how sweet His fruit is, and how delightful His shadow is, you who are now one with Him, of His flesh and of His bones, you who expect soon to see Him, you who are longing to be with Him, and hope to be caught up to dwell with Him, to see Him as He is, and to be like He is—I charge you by the roes and the hinds of the fields, by the lily beds wherein you had fellowship with your Lord, and by the garden of nuts wherein He has revealed Himself to you—I charge you, by His everlasting love, by the love you bear to Him, and by that sweet song you sang just now—

***“For He is mine, and I am His;
The God whom I adore:
My Father, Savior, Comforter,
Now and for evermore,”***

serve Him now. Serve Him forevermore, and may the Lord bless you and make you blessed, and a great blessing to others, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.